

HOME LIFE OF A NAVAL WOMAN

She Has a Peculiar Faculty for Making a Home on an Hour's Notice.

One of the hardest questions a naval woman must decide is where exactly her duty lies, between her husband and her children, writes Anna A. Rogers out of her own experience in *Woman's Home Companion*. Poverty generally decides it in favor of the latter, leaving her no choice but to stay with her family during the three years of his cruise. At such times the wife remains in entire eclipse save for the letters, many and long, that strive to bridge the separation, and it is in these letters and the companionship of her children that she finds her chief consolation. But should there be that desirable thing, a source of private income, the wife is apt to hold different views, and she goes to the station where her husband's ship comes to a given port every six months for the necessary preservative docking. Wifehood is ascendant, and the children are those of hotels, steamers and railways; little posers, nervous, overwrought, enervated, prematurely knowing as to the world and its ways, strangely ignorant as to what is called education. Then there is the third type, the childless wife, who scampers about merrily from port to port, and who has a consequent and sufficient accumulation of "experience" to make any epidemic among the departed saints. This very homelessness leads to a specialized faculty among women of the navy for making a home anywhere and at an hour's notice. A wife will arrive perhaps a day, perhaps two hours before her husband's ship reaches a given port. She immediately finds a house or a room, wires the address to the husband, so that the message will go off with the mail-orderly in the first boat ashore after the ship's arrival. Then out of perhaps one trunk will come forth a marvelous international medley of little wall-hangings, a mantle-drapery, such-curtains, table-covers, a vase or two (for flowers already bought on the way from the railway station), some photographs, a few books and the usual dainty toilet paraphernalia of the modern woman. When at last the longed-for step hesitates outside her door, and an experimental rap is heard, it is a freshly arrayed, radiant wife and hostess in her cozy little home who cries: "Come!" and springs to the door.

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